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of the book of Ruth. In opposition to the majority of critics (Driver and a few others excepted) he rejects the post-exilic date of the book. He regards it as certainly older than the exile, but admits that it has been recovered and touched up at a late date by editors who found therein a justification of marriage with foreigners. The "Bethlehem Cycle of Stories" in which he includes it, numbers also Judges xvii-xxi, which, as we know, were appended to the Book of Judges in all probability in post-exilic times. How the old story of Gibeah was treated (xix-xxi) any commentary or introduction will amply show; it is a fortunate circumstance that the idyllic story of Ruth was less severely handled.

It might have been interesting, perhaps, to test Prof. Harper's treatment of the metre of Amos and Hosea in the light of Dr. Cobb's criticisms, or to compare the text-critical standpoint of Prof. Kent with Prof. Kittel's edition of the Massoretic text; but we have already exceeded our limits. Each represents an advance, typical of the gradual progress of Biblical studies, and we may apply to them what the old divines said of their translation in the Preface to the Authorized Version:—

"As nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, and the latter thoughts are thought to be the wiser; so if we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavour to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us."

STANLEY A. COOK.

## ON THE BIBLICAL EXEGESIS OF JOSEPH IBN KASPI.

ISAAC LAST, משנה כסף, Weitere zwei Schriften des R. Joseph ibn Kaspi. Erstes Heft., Pressburg, 1905. x+176 pp., 8vo.

IN the well-known list of his works, Joseph ibn Kaspi places at the head the one entitled טירת הכסף (Canticles viii. 9). He thus return from abroad finds that his sister-in-law has married the murderer of his brother, so he avenges his brother's death by killing the relations of the second husband (who himself is dead). Later, he finds his nephew, his brother's own son, and the two turn upon those who had murdered the father and put them all to death. The point is that the whole story, with the twofold account of the vengeance, was taken down from the lips of Sinaitic Bedouin. The complete story as heard by Mr. Jennings-Bramley will be printed in his article on the Sinaitic Bedouin, Part vii, in an early number of the Pal. Explor. Fund, *Quarterly Statement*.

shows the especial esteem in which he held this work, as well as the far-reaching importance attaching to its subject. The original title of the work was, as Ibn Kaspi himself states in the list, "Book of the Secret" (ספר הסוד), and only afterwards, when he had named all his works with phrases that should remind one of his own surname, drawn from his birth-place (Argentières), did it receive the new title. The contents of the work were also not hitherto unknown. In the joint work of Renan and Neubauer, *Les Écrivains juifs français*, etc., XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris, 1893), there is a summary of its chapters (pp. 159-62); and already before this, J. Perles had published the epistle of Kalonymos b. Kalonymos to Joseph Kaspi (Munich, 1879), which consists of a criticism of the *Tirath Keseph* and at the same time affords a view of its contents. But only now has the possibility been attained of becoming more closely acquainted with the work itself. With praiseworthy zeal did Isaac Last, after publishing ten works of Ibn Kaspi in 1903<sup>1</sup>, undertake to issue two further works of the same writer; and as the first part of this publication we have the *Tirath Keseph*, or the "Book of the Secret," a welcome and valuable addition to the Kaspi literature, and, by reason of the contents of the volume, an important contribution to the history of Jewish exegesis of the Bible.

In the short preface Ibn Kaspi says: The object of this book is the elucidation of what our sages termed the "secrets of the Torah" (סודי תורה). He says more precisely in his explanation of the list of his works: The object of this book is to describe the general classes of ideas contained in most secrets of the Torah, and to elucidate the reasons of the stories that occur in the Torah<sup>2</sup>. By "secrets of the Torah," therefore, Ibn Kaspi understands in this work a deeper knowledge of the import of biblical stories, and the thoughts and teachings that occur in the narrative portion of the Pentateuch. One can thus designate the work as an Exegesis for these constituent parts of the Bible. It falls into two parts: I. On general subjects, thirty chapters (pp. 1-47); II. On special subjects (pp. 47-167). The second part begins with the establishing of seven rules for the exposition of biblical texts (pp. 47-9), and then devotes eight chapters to the elucidation of the narrative contents of the Pentateuch, viz., I. on Gen. i-v. 31 (pp. 49-60); II. Gen. v. 32-xi (67-71); III. Gen. xii-xxv. 18 (71-108); IV. Gen. xxv. 19-l (108-34); V. Exod. (134-54); VI. Lev. (155); VII. Num. (155-64); VIII. Deut. (164-7). This survey shows that three-fourths of the second part deal with the stories of Genesis. The last three

<sup>1</sup> See *Revue des Études Juives*, XLVII, 147-154.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 64 שאלות מכוונות בספר זה הוא גלוי מעמי הספרים.

Books of the Pentateuch are treated very summarily, and in the second Book, too, only miscellaneous remarks are strung together. Although Ibn Kaspi, as is the case in all his works, always refers in this work also to the importance of logic for Biblical Exegesis and especially for scientific inquiry, we can hardly speak of a logical method in the expression of his thoughts in the first general part of his work under notice. It is difficult to find the leading idea in the thirty successive chapters of this part, as they contain matters of a manifold character that do not always belong to the real theme of the book. Especial interest attaches to chap. 14 (pp. 18-20), in which we learn the first motive that gave rise to the work. At the age of thirty-five, as the chapter begins in a reminiscent strain, Ibn Kaspi went to Egypt<sup>1</sup>, where he was destined to be disappointed by the successors of Maimuni and the condition of his school, but where, on the other hand, observation of the habits and customs of that country afforded him unexpected light with regard to numerous details in the biblical narratives. As examples of this he mentions here: riding on an ass (Exod. iv. 20); he refers to Ibn Ezra's commentary on the passage and remarks, "I have often seen this (namely, wife and children riding on an ass; or even people of rank using an ass instead of a mule in Egypt)."—Further, on Exod. viii. 15, in opposition to Ibn Ezra's view about the habits of the kings of Egypt, Ibn Kaspi remarks: "The king of Egypt leaves his palace only on Tuesday and Saturday; on these two days of the week he betakes himself with his nobles and knights to a certain esplanade on the Nile to play a game at ball<sup>2</sup>".

As a further example he mentions the taking off the shoes (Exod. iii. 5; Deut. xxv. 9; Ruth iv. 7). In that country it is the custom to wear shoes of hard leather, without their being attached by anything to the foot; in order therefore to take one's shoe off, one has only to shake one's foot, and the shoe falls off itself. This is expressed in the verb של (Exod. iii. 5; cf. ושל, Deut. xix. 1). But when the shoe is taken off the foot with the hand, the verb שלף

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kaspi writes this, as he remarks at the same time, two years later, viz., as we find at the end of the work (p. 168), in the year 5077 (1317). The journey to Egypt was thus in 1315. On p. 42 Ibn Kaspi mentions that the Nagid, a great grandson of Maimuni, blessed him profusely when he first visited him. But there is no mention here of a first journey to Egypt, as the editor believes.

<sup>2</sup> An interesting passage on the game of ball occurs, p. 30 (chap. 21): "One plays it merely as a game, the other practises it, out of hygienic considerations, as physical exercise" (ישעו אחד על דרך צהוק ואחד על דרך (חכמה לכוונת החמלות לבריאות).

is used (Ruth iv. 7), just as this also denotes the drawing of the sword out of the sheath. But if the shoe is tied to the foot by straps, then its removal is expressed by חלץ (cf. וחלצו, Lev. xiv. 40).—Ibn Kaspi adduces, in the special part, a great number of such customs that he noticed in Egypt and in the Orient generally, in order the better to explain what is narrated in the Bible.—In dealing with the intended curse of Balaam (Num. xxii ff.), which was acknowledged as efficacious only on the part of the Israelites, who heard of it or knew that he wished to curse them, Ibn Kaspi mentions that it was the custom in that country then, as it is now, to listen to soothsayers and magicians (p. 43).—On Gen. ix. 25 (Noah does not curse Ham, but his son Canaan): "It is thus customary in that country, that a person who is enraged with somebody curses his children and grandchildren" (p. 69).—On Gen. xiv, he refers to the historical fact that Babylon continually acquired the supremacy over Palestine, just as the king of Shinear (= Babel) conquered the kings of Sodom and the other cities. David could also have previsioned the Babylonian exile in Psalm cxxxvii. "And so it is to-day still: The king of Egypt, who also rules over Palestine and the adjacent regions at the present time, as far as the Euphrates, never crosses this river to wage war against the king of Babylon, who is now ruler over the Tartars; at the most, he advances against him as far as the Euphrates, as once Pharaoh Necho did in the days of Josiah. But the king of Babylon constantly crosses the Euphrates, whether to plunder Damascus or to harass Jerusalem and its vicinity" (p. 75).—On Gen. xvi. 1: "Polygamy is a custom in the Orient, and the Torah permitted it our people. It was therefore a sign of the holiness of Abraham, that despite his longing for male posterity, he took no second wife in addition to Sarah" (p. 84).—On Gen. xxi. 14: "It is the custom in that country to carry children on the shoulder, just as it is usual among us to carry them in our arms" (p. 99). Ib.: "One should not ask why Abraham gave Hagar water and not wine on her journey. For only in our country do people take wine with them on a journey" (p. 101).—On Gen. xxiv. 3: "At the present day also are the women of Palestine bad" (p. 105) [i. e. of bad reputation].—On Gen. xxiv. 32: "The offering of water to one who has come from a journey is due to the custom of the people of that country in walking barefooted, like the order of the Minorites (כת הצעירים) in our country" (p. 106).—On Gen. xxv. 19 ff.: "The precedence of the firstborn, which is the subject of this chapter, belongs to the customs of that country" (p. 108).—On Gen. xxxii. 27: "Jacob's request for the blessing of his opponent rests on the custom of that country, which is likewise found in our own country, that the inferior

begs the more highly placed for his blessing" (p. 117).—On Gen. xxxvii ff.: "The story about Joseph in Egypt gave rise to the questions, how it was that Joseph sent no message to his father, as there was only a distance of eight days' journey between Palestine and Egypt; and further, how it was that Jacob heard nothing of a Hebrew slave's attainment to such high rank in Egypt. These and similar questions did I put to myself in my youth, before I went to Egypt. But after my sojourn in that country, everything became clear to me. The slaves in that country are altogether not to be compared to the servants in our country; they are rather, as the property of their master, on the same level as sheep and oxen and other domestic animals. Hence Joseph, so long as he was a slave, was altogether unable to inform his father, still less to escape. When he had risen to high rank, he first waited for the fulfilment of the dreams of his youth. But Jacob and his sons could indeed have heard of the advancement of a Hebrew slave, without thinking of Joseph, as such slaves usually came to the market. Besides, the promotion of a slave in that country is no wonder; it is rather a frequent case. For as the king has the most confidence in his foreign slaves, he appoints them as chief officials and knights" (p. 123 f.)<sup>1</sup>.—On Gen. xlv. 27: "By 'waggon's' are to be understood only those vehicles permitted to the king and great nobles; for in that land large and lofty waggon's are not generally used as in our country. Further, only nobles and knights may there ride on horses, whilst the free citizens ride on asses" (p. 132).—On Gen. xlvii. 1 f.: Here is related what Joseph did to keep his brothers away from the service of the king. "This is particularly advisable, as I know" (p. 133).—On Exod. iii. 5: "It is well known that in that country one removes one's shoes before entering a respectable house or the synagogue; it is likewise the case even in one's own house, on entering the interior apartments."—On Exod. ix. 29: "Moses had a separate place outside the Egyptian capital (מִצְרַיִם, i. e. the subsequent Cairo), where he prayed. The site is now occupied by the Moses Synagogue, whither pilgrimages are made during the Ten Days of Penitence; I also have prayed there" (p. 139).—On Exod. xii. 11: "In that country it is the custom on entering the dining-room to remove one's shoes and loosen one's girdle, for the diners are seated in a circle on the floor, which is covered with embroidered

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kaspi is doubtless thinking here of the Mamelukes, who, from the condition of Turkish-Tartar slaves, rose to the highest dignity in the thirteenth century and were rulers of the land at the time of Ibn Kaspi's sojourn in Egypt.—Ibn Kaspi speaks of "knights" (פְּרָשִׁים), with an application of the European idea to Oriental conditions.

carpets. The Israelites preparing for the Exodus are therefore commanded to eat the Paschal lamb with loins girt and feet shod, so that it should not be a regular repast, but eaten in haste and as though by the way" (p. 139).—On Exod. xxxiii. 18: "'Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory' means as much as 'Show me thyself,' for this idiom is customary in that country. For example, if one wishes to say to somebody: 'How fares it with thee, O sir?' one says: 'How fares it with thy excellence, O sir?'" (p. 146).—On Exod. xxiii. 19: "'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' In that country, and in ours too, there pass before the king along the street horses and carriages, slaves and knights and nobles, in short, his whole camp, and then the king follows" (p. 146 f.).

We may assume that such and similar observations that Ibn Kaspi made in Egypt suggested to him the idea of understanding the Biblical narratives in the light of Oriental customs. But—and this prejudices somewhat the correctness of the fundamental idea—he made no distinction between ancient and modern times, and calmly transferred present-day conditions to Biblical antiquity. Besides, he sometimes makes use of the conditions of his French home to understand the Bible. That כָּל ("all") in the Bible is sometimes to be understood hyperbolically, he explains by the remark that this is "also our custom in this our land" (p. 63).—That Abraham forbade his servants to take any share in the spoil (Gen. xiv. 24), he illustrates by a reference to "the judges of our time, who keep themselves free from the acceptance of bribery but permit gifts to be made to their wives and dependants." Abraham had to deny himself the privilege of acting in this way with regard to the spoil (p. 77).—On Gen. xviii. 3 f.: "In addressing the three men Abraham at one moment speaks to one in the singular, and at another speaks to all in the singular. Our custom too in this our land is, that whoever speaks to a number of people, inviting them, for example, to dine with him, addresses only one to whom he offers the invitation."—On Gen. xxi. 12: "God's injunction to Abraham to do all that Sarah tells him is not to be understood literally, but refers to this one case. Latin<sup>1</sup> also, the language of our country, knows this mode of expression, where the individual case is generalized" (p. 119).—On Gen. xxi. 14: "Also in this our land is it the custom for the host to give the parting guests food and drink for the next halting-place. What Abraham gave to Hagar besides in the way of goods and chattels is not mentioned, because for the story of her wandering in the desert only the mention of the travelling provisions is necessary" (p. 101).—On Gen. xxiii. 16: Abraham

<sup>1</sup> לשון רומי. But perhaps French or Provençal is meant. See note 1, p. 168.

emphasizes the full value of the money he has to pay, although he knew that Ephron would not have refused even coins of inferior value, seeing that he had actually offered him the plot of land as a present (ver. 11). Some contemporaries act otherwise, for when they give alms they select for the purpose forged or depreciated coins, because they know that the money will not be returned to them (p. 105).—On Gen. xlvii. 30: "It is our custom to-day also to bury a man beside his ancestors" (p. 133).

The revelation of the "Secrets of the Torah," which form the object of this work of Ibn Kaspi, is naturally not confined to the application of the customs and conditions of civilization observed by himself in the Orient, and especially in Egypt. On the contrary, he took particular pains to render these stories more comprehensible by rational explanations of their import and of the connexion between their several parts. At the same time the logic of the events related in the Bible and the psychology in the judgment of the persons concerned also play a principal part. In Ibn Kaspi there is no question of philosophical allegory or cabbalistic mysticism that might perhaps be sought beneath the narrative matter of the Bible. When he designates the results of his elucidation of the Biblical narratives as "Secrets of the Torah," he follows therein the usage of Maimuni, who, in the Arabic text of his *Guide*<sup>1</sup>, applies the traditional Hebrew expression סתרי תורה, to the deeper exegesis of the stories of the Bible. From Maimuni, who is besides very often quoted in this book, he also borrows the vision-theory in the explanation of certain Biblical narratives<sup>2</sup>. See especially the conclusions on Gen. xviii and Gen. xxxii. 25 ff. (pp. 91 f., 116 f.)<sup>3</sup>.

Ibn Kaspi prefaces the Second Part, that is, the principal portion of his work, with seven general rules or theses, which he wittily calls שבע מצות בני נח, because by observing them we secure repose (מנוח) from any confusing or disturbing thoughts in the understanding of biblical texts (p. 118). Only the last three of these rules I give here in brief: (V) The descriptive method of the Bible is based on countless metaphors, metonyms, and other forms of speech, which must be regarded as indispensable. This mode of expression is meant by the dictum of the sages: "The Torah speaks according to the language of man." This principle, remarks Ibn Kaspi, by reason of its com-

<sup>1</sup> *More Nebuchim*, III, 50 beginning. See my *Biblical Exegesis of Moses Maimuni*, p. 13, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, note 7; also p. 8 ff.

<sup>3</sup> In chapters 15 and 16 of the First Part (pp. 20–25) Ibn Kaspi deduces from several examples taken from the Prophetic Books that Maimuni's vision-theory must be restricted in its application.



prehensive significance, solves the most, if not all doubts in Holy Writ<sup>1</sup>. (VI) All things are ascribed to God, so that it is said of all existing things, that he is their author. This is done by means of various expressions, whether of working or making or of saying and repeating, in short, by means of every possible expression. (VII) The narratives of our Torah are, according to their simple sense, true for those who understand this sense. But in them are also concealed secrets that are within the reach of only a chosen few. What Ibn Kaspi understands by the simple sense of biblical texts he states, on p. 57, in reference to the stories in Gen. iv: "I believe that all the sentences of this narrative are to be understood according to their simple sense, but not in the simple sense as understood by the ignorant who do not know the Hebrew language, but as understood by scholars."

Some observations of a general nature occurring in the present work of Ibn Kaspi may show more clearly the character of his Biblical exegesis. On the section Gen. x. 18 ff. he remarks that the curse uttered upon Canaan is to be considered as "fruit" of this story, i. e. as its actual purpose. Still, in the Torah secondary circumstances and premisses also have their importance: the Torah offers "fruits" everywhere (p. 67).—When we read in Gen. xviii. 33: Abraham returned to his place, although he had not left his place at all, as the whole story in chap. xviii is the subject-matter of a vision, we must understand the statement thus—that when the visionary condition ceased, it seemed to Abraham that he had returned from some other place to his abode ("at the door of the tent," ver. 1). For in many passages Scripture speaks of something which the persons concerned believed to have happened, as of something that actually happened, e. g., Joshua ii. 7, where the pursuers intend pursuing the spies.—In Gen. xxxiv the complicity of the inhabitants of the town of Shechem in the guilt of Hamor and his son is not mentioned. But the non-mention of details of a story is no argument against the supplementing of such details<sup>2</sup> (p. 120). The omission of details is even a fundamental method of biblical narration<sup>3</sup> (p. 158).—The statement in Gen. xli. 48 and many other

<sup>1</sup> וזה המאמר מחכמינו ז"ל מהיר רוב הספקות שבתורה לכלותו הרב כמעט שאומר שהוא סוג מחיר ללום. The principle of the human style of speech is accordingly applied by Ibn Kaspi to a much farther extent than by Maimuni (see *The Biblical Exegesis of Moses Maimuni*, pp. 19–22). In the following passages of our work Ibn Kaspi cites the sentence, ר' דברה ה' נ' בני אדם, pp. 19, 42, 46, 47, 51, 80, 93, 94, 136, 138, 145, 149, 162.

<sup>2</sup> השמטה אינה על כל פנים. Cf. p. 99: הסתירה מתלדת מהם. . . . אבל בחר השם בהשמטה על האריכות<sup>3</sup> סתירה.

things in this chapter are to be understood according to the principle of our sages, that the Torah often employs hyperbolic figures of speech (p. 124, cf. 162). Ibn Ezra's endeavours to find out the inner connexion between contiguous chapters are unnecessary, since there is no question of precedence with regard to the chapters of the Bible (p. 155 f., cf. pp. 61, 71).—It is a favourite idea of Ibn Kaspi that the Torah as a literary product became a model for other writers, to which he is led by the familiar notion of the influence of the ancient culture of Israel upon the nations of antiquity. Thus with regard to the repetitions in the Bible, he points to Aristotle, who, in the *השמיט*<sup>1</sup>, introduces the later chapters with a recapitulation of the contents of the earlier chapters (p. 63). That a short thesis should precede the detailed discussion in Aristotle and Averroes is an imitation of the Torah's method of presentation, as Ibn Kaspi shows in Gen. xvii (p. 87 f.). In the first place Ibn Kaspi remarks that just as art when imitating nature never attains its perfection, so the perfection of the Torah has never been attained by any other work<sup>2</sup>. The method of presenting abstract thoughts, so as to make them comprehensible to ordinary men, by the medium of stories and observation, was also learnt by the philosophers from the Torah<sup>3</sup> (p. 103).

As authors of the Massoretic division of the text of the Torah, the Men of the Great Synagogue (see pp. 172, 174) are once named (p. 36). But in another place we read (p. 64): "The authors of the division of the Pentateuch text into verses, chapters, and books, displayed great wisdom; perhaps this mode of division goes back to Moses himself." Of the wisdom of the one who divided the text into chapters, Ibn Kaspi also speaks p. 70, and also pp. 121 and 158.

Of the contents of the First Part, chap. 24 deserves special notice. In this the biblical precept relating to kindness to animals is based on the view that there is a natural kinship between men and beasts. "We sons of man are very closely related to them; both we and they are children of one father, for we belong together with them to the same class of beings. Of course, those who are ignorant of

<sup>1</sup> i. e., the *Physics*, also called *השמיט השביעי* (Steinschneider, *Die hebr. Übersetzungen*, p. 108). P. 118, Ibn Kaspi quotes *ספרי הורפאים* and *ספרי השבוע*.

<sup>2</sup> P. 63: שהם ברוב ענינים מחקים עניני הורחגו כמו שהמלאכה תחקה השבוע וחלילה: שיבואו הפילוסופים לשלימות הורחגו כמו שלא תבוא המלאכה לשלימות פעולת השבוע.

<sup>3</sup> P. 134, Ibn Kaspi says of the Torah: כל מה שכלל בו זה הספר ואריסטו (read *אריסטו*) וגם ספרי מה שאחר השבוע ויותר מה שכלל הם. Then follows a very frank statement of the idea about the dependence of non-Jewish learning upon the Bible and the lost works of ancient Israel.

natural science believe the contrary: hence many true conceptions are concealed from them and false pride takes a hold of their heart."—Further, Ibn Kaspi concludes that plants also belong to the essential communion of mankind, a point that he establishes by an ingenious explanation of Deut. xx. 19, and also by quoting passages from Bible and Talmud. This view, reminding us of Buddhism, is put forward by Ibn Kaspi as his own opinion (לפי דעתי). It also reminds one remarkably, especially in its designation of animals and plants as brothers of man, of the well-known words of St. Francis of Assisi.

Ibn Kaspi's view of inherited intellectual qualities is also deserving of special attention. In connexion with Gen. xxiv. 65 he observes that the account of Rebecca ought to convince us of her remarkable intelligence. This is of great advantage to "us, her descendants"; for there is surely no doubt that "the nature of the roots is still found in the branches<sup>1</sup>" (p. 108). "The wisdom that is evident in the creation ('founding') of the Hebrew language"—he remarks in treating of the voices of the Hebrew verb (p. 122)—"is also shown in the determination of the accents (on ויתממה Gen. xix. 16) and verse-divisions; for the boughs and branches follow the root<sup>2</sup>."—"The sons of Jacob," says Ibn Kaspi in reference to Gen. xxxiv. 7 f., "were not easily and simply to be deceived, but they possessed great wisdom as an inheritance from their ancestors<sup>3</sup>" (p. 118).—"An evil inheritance from the ancestor 'Peleg' (Gen. x. 25) is disunion, which exists in greater measure in Israel as among all nations of the earth. For this evil significance of the name 'Peleg,' not he but his father Eber is named as the founder of the race. But even had our ancestors concealed the name, they could not conceal nature<sup>4</sup>" (p. 71).—Satirical conceits like this, or even purely humorous remarks, are also found in Ibn Kaspi within the frame of biblical exegesis. Where he speaks of Lot's daughters (Gen. xix. 31 ff.) he cannot refrain from the remark: "There is no doubt that the advice of women has evil as its result, whether disgrace, as in the present case, or death, as in the case of the advice of Eve, who gave her husband to eat of the death-bringing fruit, or as in the case of

<sup>1</sup> ואין ספק גם כן ששבע השורש נמצא בסעיפים ערין.

<sup>2</sup> Here Ibn Kaspi mentions all the varied expressions of the Bible for branches and boughs right to the top of the tree (צמרה, Ezek. xvii. 3). But it was unnecessary for the editor to give the respective passages in the Bible, since it is not a matter of quotation here.

<sup>3</sup> ערומים גדולים ירושה מאבותיהם.

<sup>4</sup> אבל לא רצו אבותינו להחידם לפלג להיות רעה אמנם אם יכלו להסתיר השם לא יכלו להסתיר השבע ועדים נאמנים אהנו עד היום לאמנו הבכירה אשר פלג.

the advice of Job's wife (Job ii. 9). Happy he who escapes them!" (p. 95).—In reference to Gen. xxx. 14 he expresses his contempt for women in the following laconic style; "Rachel and Leah were women, they were not Moses and Aaron" (p. 114). On Gen. viii. 17: "In the case of many of the animals to be put out of the ark, no special means were necessary, but Noah opened doors and windows, and they ran out of themselves—and so they are running ever since" (p. 66).—He concludes a little excursus on dreams with the following sarcasm (p. 90): "God forbid, that we should also do what we often see in our dreams. How often does it happen that people of our plebs (לְהַמּוֹנֵנוּ) are commanded in a dream to hang themselves or to drown themselves? To be sure, it would be a good thing many a time if they carried out these commands!"—On Gen. xxiv. 47, where the narrator alters in Rebecca's favour what is reported in vers. 22-4: "Perhaps Rebecca was not present at the story of Abraham's servant, and even if she were present, she doubtless stood there with 'the meekness of the wolf and the modesty of the fox,' for young maidens are wont to assume such a cloak of humility, embroidered with deception" (p. 107).—On the "sign" in Exod. iii. 12: "Moses did not ask for the sign, as Gideon did (Judges vi. 17). God gave it him by favour, and what is given by favour ought not to be made the subject of inquiry, with respect to the reason of its being given, as the ancients say: 'One ought not to examine carefully the teeth of a gift-horse'" (p. 137). If Moses," he continues further, "was satisfied with the sign given to him by God, why should we distress ourselves about it, and why do the commentators find it difficult to explain?"—Ibn Kaspi gives expression to his exegetical ignorance in a drastic fashion in connexion with Num. xxi. 9: "With regard to the serpent, I am by no means so much perplexed as many of the commentators; but in me there is a perplexity of which I can never be cured, unless God were to command one of his prophets to make a serpent like that one, which I might behold and recover. The perplexity consists in that I know not what the serpent means, just as I do not know the meaning of the breast-plate and ephod, nor the meaning of the tree that Moses threw into the water of Marah (Exod. xv. 23), as well as the others of his actions that he did at God's command. How should we understand his actions and wonders, seeing that we cannot at all understand the wonders of other prophets like Elijah and Elisha,

<sup>1</sup> כמאמר הקדמונים אל הסוס הנחן אין לברוק שניו ברוק ובמחן. Most likely a French (or Provençal) proverb. The editor rightly compares the German: "Do not look a gift-horse in the mouth."

who are much below Moses in rank? And how should we understand the actions of the latest prophets too, seeing that we do not understand so many things in the accounts contained in the Book of Chronicles and in the narratives of the scroll of Esther? Alas for us and those like us who know their failing, understand their malady, but who have tried the physicians for a cure in vain" (p. 163). In another passage too (p. 135) he makes a confession of ignorance in regard to the wonders of the Bible. He does not wish to make them the subject of a systematic elucidation for two reasons; the one reason is, because it is not suitable to do it; the second and stronger reason is—"Because I do not understand it (שלא אדע זה)." This confession of ignorance is, to be sure, very isolated in Ibn Kaspi. In this work of his too, he likes to speak of himself and his work in a somewhat eulogistic fashion. He has no hesitation now and again in describing the results of his investigation as a sort of divine revelation<sup>1</sup>. He plumes himself especially on his brevity, although he often gives the impression rather of loquacity. On one occasion, after speaking of the terse descriptive style of the Torah, with its omission of many details, he says: "Since one must walk in the ways of God, and He composed short books (והוא שחבר ספרים קצרים), how should I compose long books?" (p. 69)<sup>2</sup>. He addresses his sons as readers of his book, while also thinking at the same time no doubt of other young readers. Once he apostrophizes them: "Know ye, that I offer here for nought that which I acquired in my lonely study, wherein I laboured day and night" (p. 90). On another occasion (p. 64) he addresses them in metaphorical speech: "Bring ye forth from your treasure-chambers silver and gold, and lay ye this therein, for it is a jewel for kings." By this, as the context shows, he does not mean his own work, but the subject of it—the Torah.—On p. 164 we find a remarkable utterance of Ibn Kaspi, which is of importance for the history of the Jewish translation of the Bible: "Do not expect from me here (in Deuteronomy) an explanation of details. For I know that it displeases the fools, that I should compose my verbal explanation in our language, the Roman language, which had to begin with the word בראשית and finish with the word Israel (the last word of the Pentateuch). But I thought, another can also do that; I have

<sup>1</sup> P. 36: שמעו בנים מה שגילה; p. 86 (on Gen. xvii): סודותי שגילה השם אלי; שמעוני אחי ושימו לבבכם להבין מה: p. 124: לי השם בואת המראה מסודות נפלאות ראו בני גילתי לכם מה שגלה לנו השם: p. 90 (on Gen. xviii): שגלה ה' אלי מוסדות תורתנו ולא גלה זה לכל בעל הדא.

<sup>2</sup> See also p. 103: איני חושק בקיצור על כל פנים: P. 118: ולמה אאריך ואני קץ: בו וגם בלשון הקצר איני כותב ברצון נפשי רק שמלאך רוחה את ידי ומניע קלמוסי.

something else to do<sup>1</sup>." Apparently one expected from Ibn Kaspi a complete translation or at least a complete glossary to the Penta-teuch, like that recently edited from a Paris MS.<sup>2</sup>

In this work, too, Ibn Kaspi reproaches his predecessors in the domain of Biblical Exegesis, particularly with the neglect of logic (see pp. 44, 68, 98, 139). At the beginning of his discussion of Exodus (p. 134) he first recommends his readers to study the commentaries of Rashi and Ibn Ezra. He quotes these two exegetes pretty often, especially Ibn Ezra. With regard to the latter he refers to the praise bestowed on him by Maimuni "in one of his letters": he thus regarded as genuine the well-known pseudepigraphic letter. Besides Rashi and Ibn Ezra, and the constantly cited Maimuni, the following Jewish authors are also quoted in our work: David Kimchi (always קמחי אבן, pp. 1, 25, 144, 145), Ibn Ganâḥ (1, 6, 36<sup>3</sup>), Josippon (5, 7).—Besides the passages already mentioned, Aristotle is cited elsewhere too. Philosophers generally are quoted as follows: pp. 29, 41, 57, 59, 63, 67, 83.—The wise men of Jewish traditional literature are called: הפילוסופים מחכמי דתנו (p. 62) or הפילוסופים השלמים מבני עמנו (p. 83)<sup>4</sup>.

Herr Last has devoted scrupulous care to the editing of Ibn Kaspi's work, the prominent features of which have been described in the foregoing pages. He uses as a basis a Bodleian MS. (Suppl. Heb. MSS., C. 16) and also supplies variant and complementary readings from a MS. belonging to the collection of the late Dr. H. B. Levy, the Hamburg bibliophile. He makes the interesting passages in the text prominent by the use of spaced lettering, and accompanies it with not too many short remarks, in which reference is also made to the criticism of Kalonymos b. Kalonymos. With regard to correctness the text presented here by Last is much more carefully restored than that of his former Kaspi edition (*Zehn Schriften*). The number of printer's errors is small, and emendations are only rarely required. The following series of corrections may conclude this article<sup>5</sup>:—

Page 3, line 1, for לוֹאֶה read לוֹאֶה.—Ib., l. 22, read כאסיפת.—P. 6,

<sup>1</sup> כיוורע אני שהשוטים ירע בעיניהם כי לא אעשה פי' מלות בלשונו לשון רומי ושאתחיל זה משם בראשית עד שם ישראל איש לא יפקד אבל אמרתי יעשה זה ע"י זולתו כי יש לנו עסקים אחרים.

<sup>2</sup> See *J. Q. R.*, XVII, 800–807.

<sup>3</sup> On note 4 of the editor cf. especially my work: *Aus der Schrifterklärung des Abulwalid Merwan Ibn Ganâḥ* (1889), p. 28 f.

<sup>4</sup> See also p. 110: השלמים מעמנו השומרים חזרה משה.

<sup>5</sup> See also the list of corrections on p. 175 f.

note 1, for הר"ם read הר"ם.—P. 10, l. 16, read עיוות (= עיוות).—P. 17, l. 22, read יתנה.—P. 21, l. 10, for כנענה read כנעני.—P. 23, last line but one, for ההוא read ההיא (this error, ההוא for ההיא after הארץ, occurs again very often, and seems to be based on the MS.).—P. 28, l. 23. Before השם supply מן.—P. 30, l. 15, for מניע read מניע.—P. 33, l. 25, for חושבים read חשבים.—P. 35, l. 17, for בכלם read בללם.—P. 54, l. 25, for נ"ד read נ"ד.—P. 55, l. 21, for ענה read ענה.—P. 56, l. 19, for ייער read ייער (יער).—P. 58, l. 1, for הבחירים read בדברים (cf. p. 72, l. 26, והתנועות הבחירות; p. 79, l. 1, בדברים).—P. 62, l. 20, for הכוללות read הכוללות.—P. 64, l. 6 from bottom, for ממינו read ממינו; for מאישיו read מאישנו.—Ib., l. 2 from bottom, for מכונתי read מכונתי.—P. 67, l. 19, for הידיעה read הידיעה.—P. 68, l. 6, for תכופות read תכופות.—P. 81, l. 4, for הבחורים read הדברים.—P. 85, l. 1, for בראותה read בראותה.—P. 88, l. 5, for התבודדת read התבודדת.—P. 102, l. 1, for נשא read נשא.—P. 122, l. 7, for והאמרים read והאמרים (plur. of אמיר).—P. 124, l. 7, for וואלו read וואלו.—P. 138, l. 23, for שפסקה read שפסקה.—P. 143, l. 2, for גלאם read גלאם.—P. 150, l. 7, for סדורים read סדורים.—P. 163, l. 19, for ההטעאה read ההטעאה.—P. 165, l. 25. The editor does not understand the words כי עדות הוא קבון מעדת המצבה and puts an interrogation mark. But for מעדת we must read מעדה; the words mean: עדות (Deut. vi. 20) is plural of עד (Gen. xxxi. 52).

The second part of the work will contain Ibn Kaspi's *לכסף*: a running commentary on the Pentateuch, which is closely connected with the work in the first part. May the efforts of the diligent and self-sacrificing editor on behalf of the publication of Ibn Kaspi's works be attended with fruitful results!

W. BACHER.

BUDAPEST, June, 1905.

## DR. LÉVY'S MAIMONIDES.

*La Métaphysique de Maimonide*, par LOUIS-GERMAIN LÉVY, Rabbin de Dijon, Docteur ès lettres. Dijon, Imprimerie Barbier-Marilier, 1905. Pp. 149.

CONSIDERING Maimonides' colossal services in the orderly arrangement and systematization of Rabbinic thought, it seems a strange irony of fate that his own philosophic masterpiece should need